



Patriarch Kirill visits Armenian Genocide Memorial

In the morning of March 17, 2010, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos Karekin II of All Armenians visited the Armenian Genocide Memorial on Tsitsernakabad Hill in Yerevan.

They were welcomed by Mr. Aik Demoyan, director of the Armenian Genocide Museum Institute, as well as bishops and clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Following the military who carried mourning wreaths, the two church leaders walked along the Wall of Mourning to the memorial pedestal at which guards of honour were lined up.

The Patriarch and the Catholicos laid wreaths at the pedestal. The inscription on the Patriarchal wreath band read: 'Eternal memory be to the sons and daughters of the Armenian people who died in the 1912 Genocide. From Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia'.

The two church leaders lead a requiem service, with the Echmiadzin Cathedral's choir singing. Then Patriarch Kirill and his delegation sang 'Eternal Memory'.

The Russian Orthodox delegation were introduced to the exposition of the Museum of the Genocide. His Holiness Kirill signed the Museum's guest book.

According to the tradition, the Primate of the Russian Church planted a silver pine spruce in the Memory Alley.

Tsitsernakabad is a memorial devoted to the victims of the Armenian Genocide committed in the Ottoman Empire in 1915. It was erected on the hill of the same name (meaning 'a swallow's fortress' in Armenian) in Yerevan. Thousands of Armenians and visitors ascend it on each April 24 to honour the memory of the victims.

The initiative to build a memorial compound was put forth in 1965 which marked the 50th anniversary

of the Genocide. The memorial was opened in 1967.

The 44-meter-high stele symbolizes the will of the Armenian people for rebirth. Along the stele from bottom up there is a deep fracture dividing it into two parts and symbolizing the divided Armenian people whose lesser part lives in Armenia while the greater one in the diaspora. Next to the stele there is a pedestal formed by twelve large inclined stone slabs with a fire burning in the center of the truncated cone formed by them.

There is a 100-meter-high wall around the Memorial's garden, with the names of Armenian cities and villages whose people were subjected to extermination.

Built in 1995, the Museum of the Genocide has become the last edifice to be constructed in the compound. Located almost fully underground, it has two storeys with the total area of 2000 square meters.

Located nearby is the Memory Alley where visiting foreign political and public leaders and heads of states and churches plant silver pine spruces in memory of the victims of the Genocide.

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